

Community Profile

December 2007

NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER BETHESDA, MD

Community Growth Point of Contact:

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Quick Facts

Community at a Glance:

Geographic area affected by military installation growth: Montgomery County, Maryland

Latest population for affected geographic area: 932,131 (2006 Census)

Projected 2011 population for affected geographic area: 1,008,000 people

Largest city/town/municipality near the installation:
Bethesda, MD, adjacent to the Nation's Capital, within the
Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area

Top 3 growth challenges:

- Road and public transportation capacity
- Housing availability and affordability
- BRAC-related demands at larger growth communities elsewhere in Maryland may divert resources from important County priorities such as transportation, school construction and social services.

Bethesda at a Glance

Acreage of Installations: 243 acres

Population Statistics for Bethesda

	Existing	Projected (post-BRAC) estimated
Military Personnel	2,861	3,206
Dependents	2,761	3,668
Civilian Personnel	1,642	2,783
Contractors	746	988

Program Management and Coordination

In February, 2007, the Montgomery County Executive issued an executive order that established the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center BRAC Implementation Task Force, commonly known as the BRAC Implementation Committee (BIC). The BIC is an advisory body that meets monthly and focuses on necessary community adjustments required by the expansion of the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) Bethesda. The BIC includes representatives from county and state government agencies, neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce, major nearby employers, NNMC Bethesda staff and elected officials at the county, state and federal level.

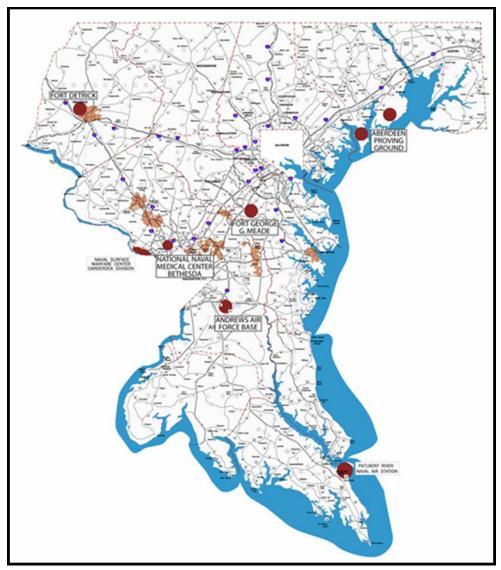
In June 2007, the County Executive appointed a BRAC Coordinator within the Offices of the County Executive. The BRAC Coordinator staffs the BIC which helps identify BRAC-related issues, and coordinates inter- and intra-governmental strategies to address those issues.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), has not been released. The release has been postponed due to issues surrounding the care of the wounded at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and clarification as to which medical services will realign to NNMC Bethesda. The Draft EIS is now expected to be released in mid-December 2007, with a 45-day public review period, for which the County Executive and County Council President requested an extension, and the Navy denied. The BIC will be heavily involved in reviewing the Draft EIS and advising the County Executive on his response.

In its monthly meetings, the BIC discussed and received presentations on a number of issues, including:

- The process and timeline for reviewing and analyzing the Draft EIS;
- Transportation Demand Management programs implemented by other agencies to ease traffic congestion;
- "Lessons learned" by other BRAC-impacted communities from this and previous BRAC rounds;
- Progress on proposals to build a new entrance to the local Metro station and to construct the proposed light rail or bus rapid transit Purple Line;
- The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDoT) process for designating and funding priority transportation projects; and
- Federal funding opportunities to address transportation and other BRACrelated concerns.

Montgomery County is represented on state and regional BRAC panels. The BRAC Coordinator is the County's representative before the Maryland Military Installations Council, supported by the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, and the Governor's BRAC Subcabinet. The Subcabinet is chaired by the Lieutenant Governor and consists of Cabinet secretaries and heads of key BRAC-impacted agencies. The Subcabinet is developing a state-wide BRAC Action Plan, to be unveiled in December 2007, which is to address short- and long-term impacts of BRAC on transportation, housing, education, employment, and emergency and social services. The Subcabinet has held public meetings in each of the BRAC-impacted counties, including its Montgomery County meeting in mid-October 2007.



Area map showing location of National Naval Medical Center Bethesda

The BRAC Coordinator sits on the Subcabinet's Local Government Subcommittee, comprised of the state's major BRAC-impacted counties and municipalities, and that body's Transportation Committee. The BRAC Coordinator also meets regularly with representatives of BRAC communities throughout the National Capital Region of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The BRAC Coordinator also represents Montgomery County on the Fort George G. Meade Regional Growth Management Committee because significant BRAC expansion at Fort Meade is expected to bring many new residents to Montgomery County and the County's workforce development and education system can help meet the demand for highly skilled workers.

BRAC Implementation Committee:

Committee Chair:

• John Carman

Elected and Other Government Officials represented:

- U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski
- U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin

- Congressman Albert Wynn
- Congressman Chris Van Hollen
- State Senator Brian Frosh
- Delegate William A. Bronrott
- County Council Member Roger Berliner

Government Agencies represented:

- Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation
- Montgomery County Office of Intergovernmental Relations
- Office of Planning, Maryland Department of Transportation
- Montgomery County Planning Board
- Office of Research Facilities, National Institutes of Health
- Montgomery County BRAC Coordinator

Military Liaisons represented:

- National Naval Medical Center Bethesda
- Walter Reed Army Medical Center

Community Representatives:

- Community residents with extensive transportation and planning experience
- Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart
- Suburban Hospital
- Bethesda Urban Partnership
- Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce
- East Bethesda Citizens Association
- Glenbrook Village Homeowners Association
- Bethesda Parkview Citizens Association
- Chevy Chase Hills Civic Association
- Locust Hill Citizens Association
- Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board
- Chevy Chase View
- Maplewood Citizens Association

The Executive Order establishing the BIC also named a staff technical working group to provide information and support on specific issues associated with the BRAC impacts. The technical working group is expanded as necessary:

- Office of Community Based Planning, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)
- Office of Transportation Planning (M-NCPPC)
- Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT)
- Montgomery County DPWT Commuter Services
- Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
- Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs
- Montgomery County Department of Police
- Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service
- Montgomery County Department of Homeland Security
- Montgomery County Department of Finance
- Montgomery County Offices of the County Executive
- Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, Montgomery County

- Maryland Department of Transportation (MDoT) Office of Planning
- Maryland State Highway Administration
- Maryland Transit Administration
- Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, Capital Region
- National Capital Planning Commission

Primary Growth-Related Challenges

The BRAC action at NNMC Bethesda, is a significantly "urban BRAC." It is the "exception to the rule" in many ways. This action is taking place "Inside the Beltway" in a highly-congested downtown area in one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas, as well as the National Capital Region. NNMC is "the President's Hospital" and is part of the Bethesda Hospitals Emergency Preparedness Initiative, partnering with its neighbors, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Suburban Hospital (the region's designated trauma center) — in the event of a major crisis in the National Capital Region.

While the intent of some BRAC actions is to consolidate dispersed multi-service functions into unified and secure campuses away from major population centers, this NNMC Bethesda BRAC action is bringing thousands of new personnel and patients into a heavily congested urban area that is not designed for such accelerated growth. NNMC and NIH, which house laboratories specializing in infectious disease and bio-terror research, are in the National Capital Region and have special national security needs. BRAC-related congestion could compound emergency response problems in time of crisis.

Many other communities will experience levels of growth they had hoped to achieve over a longer period of time. BRAC is bringing anticipated growth in a much more compressed period. Montgomery County, in general, and downtown Bethesda, in particular, are already experiencing rapid growth and development. This BRAC action will bring unanticipated personnel growth and will double the outpatient capacity of the military medical center in a fashion that does not complement expected growth patterns. It is estimated that the outpatient load will double to between 900,000 and 1,000,000 visits to the campus each year, most by car. The increased employee and patient load will place tremendous stress on a roadway infrastructure that is already at capacity or failing. Persistent gridlock around the medical center campus will surely make campus access difficult, or nearly impossible in an emergency situation, for doctors, patients and emergency vehicles.

The County's growth management policy has revolved around Transit Oriented Development, to encourage employers, homeowners, and renters to locate near and use mass transit facilities. As a medical center that operates around the clock, many NNMC employees will not be able to take advantage of transit services even if they are made more readily available. Most outpatients seeking medical treatment will not be able to use mass transit either. Nonetheless, transportation solutions can be devised and implemented to help alleviate the impending regional traffic crisis.

The Draft EIS may address temporary on-base and off-base lodging for outpatients and their families. The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have also initiated the Wounded Warriors Transition Program to focus on providing long-term care at regional facilities across the country and closer to the homes of the returning wounded.

Few options exist for moderate income housing near the hospital, with limited lower rent apartments available in Bethesda and North Bethesda. In a recent survey a limited number of vacant efficiency and one-bedroom units were identified within a 5-mile radius of NNMC Bethesda as affordable to a single household with an annual income of \$66,150. Insufficient lodging facilities also have been identified in the Bethesda and North Bethesda area. Such lodging facilities will be needed to serve NNMC Bethesda visitors and out-patients. The BIC will be developing specific initiatives in response to these concerns, together with the Maryland BRAC Subcabinet.

The BRAC Subcabinet is scheduled to release their BRAC Action Plan in December 2007. The Action Plan will identify, prioritize and guide critical tasks, programs, projects, activities and initiatives to address the needs created by the arrival of residents and businesses throughout Maryland in response to BRAC. These actions will be completed in collaboration with those initiated by Montgomery County in response to the projected growth at NNMC Bethesda. The BIC recognizes the national importance of ensuring that NNMC Bethesda patients, their families, and employees can reach the hospital, and not be mired by gridlock — especially in emergency situations.

Initiatives and Program Elements

We have developed a priority project list for our state government. Once the Draft EIS has been released and transportation issues have been identified we will develop a Federal legislative strategy to pursue significant Federal assistance to upgrade the transportation infrastructure in support of NNMC.

Additional Information

Montgomery County has developed a robust and frequently updated web site that is an excellent resource: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BRAC.